

BOOK REVIEWS

Syphilis. A Synopsis. VENEREAL DISEASES PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CENTER. U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare. Public Health Service Publication No. 1660, January, 1968. Pp. 133, 68 figs. U.S. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. (\$2.)

This publication by the Venereal Diseases Program of the United States Public Health Service is aimed principally at the medical student and the family physician. Considering the problem of presenting syphilis in its many aspects in the form of a synopsis of 122 small pages, the contributors and publishers have done very skilful and elegant work. This is a hard-backed publication on high quality paper with no less than 65 excellent coloured reproductions of clinical photographs, *post mortem* specimens, and photomicrographs. The text in the most part is detailed yet concise, dogmatic within sensible limits and up to date; the sections on the pathology and natural history of syphilis, on early syphilis, on serum tests, and on treatment are excellent. Unfortunately the descriptions of late syphilis are frankly deficient. When one considers the classic contributions by great American syphilologists, it is disappointing to find that the clinical features of cardiovascular syphilis are allotted only 16 lines and those of paresis only 7, in which there is no note of dementia. If selection of material and restriction of space were so crucial, one would have reluctantly preferred omission of the first-class introductory historical précis.

Minor points require note: In meningo-vascular neurosyphilis "the CSF is always abnormal"; "false positive reactions (to the Kolmer or VDRL tests) in the spinal fluid are rare" immediately followed by "the presence of reagin in the spinal fluid is the only finding which is pathognomonic in neurosyphilis"; it is doubtful if the FTA 200 test should yield positive results in only 40 per cent. of cases of primary syphilis at a time when the VDRL test is positive in 76 per cent.; one questions also the recommendation that the follow-up of late neurosyphilis should be terminated only 2 years after treatment.

Despite these criticisms this is a good synopsis meriting a wide readership.

J. A. H. HANCOCK

Essays on Tropical Dermatology. Edited by R. D. G. PH. SIMONS and J. MARSHALL. 1969. Pp. 283. Excerpta Medica Foundation, Amsterdam. (£8 7s., post paid.)

This book was originally planned to supplement Robert Simons's "Handbook of Tropical Dermatology and Mycology". As joint editor James Marshall has covered the field that was originally planned and has added other subjects of his own choosing.

Of particular interest to all venereologists is the chapter entitled "The Treponematoses" by R. R. Willcox. This is clearly written and easy to read, yet it has very full references. The article deals with the origin of the treponematoses, saprophytic treponemes, pathogenic treponemes in animal and in man, the significance of persisting treponemes, and the possibility of a vaccine.

The general level of the contributions is high. They include:

- "Epidemiology of skin diseases" (Marshall)
- "Tropical phagedenic ulcer" (Basset)
- "Vaccination and its possible complications" (Waddington)
- "Sarcoidosis: Besnier-Boeck-Schaumann's disease—with special reference to tropical environment" (Kooij)
- "Granuloma multiforme" (Leiker)
- "South American leishmaniasis" (Pierini)
- "Cutaneous leishmaniasis" (Kurban and Chaglassian)
- "Cutaneous amoebiasis" (Biagi)
- "Schistosomal granuloma of the skin" (El-Zawahry)

James Marshall has compiled a useful index.

This is an expensive book which is well produced and has good illustrations; it is useful for reference and should find a place in medical libraries in the United Kingdom.

E. M. C. DUNLOP